

The Builder.

No. CCCLVI.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1849.



AMONGST a pile of books with which we would make our readers acquainted is one, still wet from the press, by Lord Albert Denison (late Conyngham), whose recent accession of wealth, with his new name, will be hailed with lively satisfaction by all who know his lordship's kind feelings, liberal views, and enlightened tastes. It is entitled, "Wanderings in Search of Health," and is the journal, written with a running pen, of recent hasty travels in Greece and Italy, made with his amiable lady, between November of last year and May of this. As it is published for private circulation only, it will fall into few hands, and we shall therefore give some abstracts from it relating to those matters which more immediately interest our circle.

When in Malta, the author visited the colossal church building at Musta, on the plan of the Pantheon at Rome. The village contains only 6,000 inhabitants, almost all of the poorer classes; and this enormous building arises from a native of the village, a poor priest, Don Felice Calleja, having celebrated his first mass in the Pantheon. "The thought then suddenly struck him of raising a similar temple in his own native village. Upon his return to Malta and to Musta, appointed parish priest, he laboured hard in the accumulation of wealth, and laid by money with the most scrupulous care. Unable to carry out his daring plan in his life-time, he left his property by will for the purpose of erecting a round temple like the Pantheon. Even after his death, the strongest opposition arose to this building. The bishop, as well as the general opinion in the island, opposed the construction of a round temple, upon the plea that round temples, though used for heathen worship, are not adapted for that of Christians." The bishop insisted on a plan being drawn by his own architect, in the form of a Greek cross. The inhabitants, however, were so pleased by a plan presented to them by M. Grognet, an enthusiastic lover of his profession, residing in Malta, that they petitioned the governor: objections were overruled, and the first stone was laid on May 30th, 1833. The funds left by the parish priest, 30,000 scudi, being quite inadequate to the object in view, subscriptions were raised, and labour being the principal expense, the church bestows indulgences upon those who work there gratuitously on Sundays. From two to three hundred volunteers have been seen labouring there on the same day; and the church is thus progressing gradually, though slowly, towards completion. "The total height of the edifice, when finished, will be 200 feet. The main body of the edifice consists of a circle of about 200 feet in extreme diameter: it has two projections, at opposite sides; one, a portico of 125 feet long by 60 feet high, with a double row of columns, between two bell towers: here are three entrance doors. The other end opposite projection is ornamented with pilasters, and contains sacristies or vestries, with an upper story of rooms, for a certain number of priests to be attached to the church. The edifice surrounds a church already existing

upon the spot, which will be removed as soon as the new one is completed. This building is astonishing, when the slender means of those who commenced and are finishing it are taken into consideration."

The new cathedral at Boulogne, mentioned by us some time ago, is similarly the result of the determination of an individual, and assists in showing how much any one man can accomplish if he set himself determinedly to the task. Will goes farther than power.

When Lord Albert reached Athens, he of course hurried to the Acropolis,—at once, as Wordsworth says, "the fortress, the sacred inclosure, the treasury, and the museum of art of the Athenian nation;" and which, though it has suffered in every possible manner, remains unrivalled "as a concentration of wonders in architecture and sculpture." "Alas!" says Lord Albert, "that the ill-directed zeal of the Athenians of the present day should be disfiguring it more than the hands or weapons of earlier barbarians. In searching for inscriptions, or those statues and works of art, that may be buried under the accumulated rubbish of the whole Christian era, they tumble all the mould and stuff cleaned away down the sides of the rock, instead of carting it away, and are actually changing the hold features of the rock. In vain I have lifted my voice against such Vandalism. I feel that it is useless." What is the Athenian Society of Antiquaries about?

Our author did not find any really first-rate works of antiquity for sale. By law, half of everything found belongs to the Government, and half to the proprietor of the soil. The proprietor has the option of receiving his moiety of the value in money, and to hand the thing found to the authorities, or to pay the half and retain it himself, but in this case must give security for its safety. The exportation of antiquities is absolutely forbidden, but this goes for nothing. Individuals who find anything know that if they yield it to Government they will never receive payment for it, and the result, therefore, is, that they sell it to some foreigner, who bribes the Custom-house officers to shut their eyes.

Speaking of the Choragic monument of Lysicrates, the writer says, "every sort of abomination must now be waded through to view it."

Of the Temple of Theseus, he remarks,— "It will be remembered that only four metopes on the southern, and four on the northern side are sculptured; the remaining metopes on those sides being destitute of ornament. M. Pittaky suggested to me that this might arise from their having been painted,—Micun, who ornamented this temple, having been a painter, as well as sculptor. The whole of this temple, like the Parthenon, inclines inwards. This has most materially added to the strength and durability of their construction. Its lines, also, are curved, like those of the Parthenon."

The palace at Athens is "a huge, two-storied, white building, measuring 300 feet by 280: it has a portico in front, and a colonnade in the rear. These, with the window-frames, cornices, angles, plinths, &c., are formed of Pentelic marble; the walls being of limestone, faced with cement. It is undoubtedly an unsightly building. The window-frames are so flat and plain, as to give it the appearance of a manufactory."

The number of small churches and chapels in Greece, as compared with the population, is a striking feature. In those that are near any temple, the marble objects of ancient art are

placed for preservation, and portions are built into the walls. The former Cathedral of Athens, now deserted, is a curious and interesting example of this. Our author was told that there are no less than seventy deserted churches and chapels in Athens, and that all these are to be pulled down, with the exception of the ancient cathedral, to supply funds, by the sale of the sites and materials, for the new cathedral now building.

The bed of the Ilissus is dry!

Corinth, Mycenæ, Marathon, &c., were visited; and, in returning, they saw revolutionized Naples, Baia (with its ruined baths, Herculaneum, &c.): and they paced,

— "with reverent tread,

O'er hushed Pompeii's long-forgotten dead.

The railway has greatly changed the aspect of Pompeii: it is no longer wholly "a city of the dead." It is still, however, a spot which speaks to the heart. As Mr. Michell says, in his charming volume, "Ruins of Many Lands,"—

"A hushed city meets the curious gaze,
Charms while it awes, and wraps us in amaze.
Called from the grave of dim Lethæan years,
Her graceful form again Pompeii fears—
Reveals her widening streets, her frescoed walls,
Gods on her hearths, and pictures in her halls."

Of Paestum, Lord Albert says little, and we are tempted to supply a picture from the poet we have just quoted, who exclaims,—here

— Paestum's giant temples—lift thine eyes—
In all their stern and columned grandeur rise.
Pause! traveller, pause! say, doth not wonder thrill

Thy creeping veins, and owe thy bosom fill?
Wrestling with Time, the hoary brethren stand,
Superbly graceful, and severely grand.
Their style of rival countries seems to speak,
In strength Egyptian, and in beauty Greek.
Built ere Minerva's shrine on Athens gazed,
Or by wild Tiber Rome's rude walls were raised:
Three thousand years these structures fad to bow,
Massive when Christ was born, and massive now."

We must here, however, leave Lord Albert; and we sincerely hope that in his "wanderings" he has found health, as we have found pleasure.

Mr Weale's Rudimentary Series is going on satisfactorily. The last part issued is a portion of a "Dictionary of Terms used in Architecture, Art, Engineering, &c.," by the publisher himself. It forms a volume equal in size to two of those on other subjects already issued, and will extend to a third. It appears to be carefully compiled, and will be found very useful to a large number of persons. It would be easy to make a long list of words not to be found in it, but a fair reply to this would be,—proposed units. We give one of his definitions,—*Esthetic*, "the power of perception by means of the senses: the word implies the perception and the study of those qualities which constitute the beautiful and artistic, and form the finer essence of all productions of fine art. It carries with it, therefore, a more exact and philosophic meaning than the word 'taste.' In its adjective form, in which it more frequently occurs, it is particularly useful, as no adequate epithet can be substituted for it. Thus we speak of the 'æsthetic sense,' of 'æsthetic feeling,' or 'study,' or 'principles,' &c.; but we cannot correctly say the 'tasteful sense,' or 'tasteful study.'"

The treatise on "Drainage and Sewage of Towns and Buildings," by G. D. Dempsey, in the same series, would not have had our commendation if we had looked no further than the introduction. In this the author proposes to drain the metropolis, on the converging principle proposed by Mr. Austin, into 800 enormous cesspools or "sumps," at 200